



December 5, 2018 Department of Public Services

The following items are designed to present information on Public Services Department work items recently completed, those expected to occur during the upcoming month, and other items of potential interest to the public. Information is subject to change at any time due to staff availability, weather events or other emergency situations, or numerous other factors. Items are not necessarily in order of importance, and may not be repeated in their entirety from month to month unless there is a need for continued reporting.

1. Citizen Request Module items – The City launched the new “My Monroe on the Go” application in August that is now being used to track citizen requests, and will now automatically generate work orders for service. During the month of November, a total of 31 service requests were entered requiring action from this department, down significantly from 68 the previous month. The largest category, as in most months (through down by more than 75% from October), was Forestry with 8 requests, followed by 5 pothole requests and 6 other road hazard concerns, 4 garbage complaints, 3 street light outages, 3 signs requests, and 2 others, which included a request to relocate a street light and a concern about alley damage from one of the City’s contractors.
2. Forestry Activities – in the month of November the Forestry work group completed eight (8) tree removals and trimmed 25 trees, and brush was cleared in two (2) City alleys. Due to the backlog of large-scale removals, we will be contracting out for some larger items during the month of December. The Forestry Supervisor is also working to update the City’s Geographic Information System (GIS) to include this past year’s work activities, which will involve the removal of 205 trees from the inventory and uploading of data for 231 new trees.
3. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity, as it generally is for most of the year. Citizens should feel free to contact Public Services staff via the citizen request module, phone, or email to report potholes, and we will do our best to handle complaints as quickly as possible. We typically try to address any complaints within 48 hours most of the year. Obviously, during inclement weather, resolution of potholes tends to be more problematic but we do attempt to handle these as soon as the weather stabilizes after receiving the complaint.
4. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker was transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year, but has returned to the DPS labor pool. The temporary assignment began April 2 and ended October 27 this year as per the adopted budget and approved organizational structure. Should the Parks Supervisor require additional assistance or for heavy projects off-season, DPS staff will assist as able at their request, otherwise full responsibility for all parks items other than forestry issues, the grass cutting contract, and contracted capital projects falls under the Parks and Recreation Department.

5. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – the City Council approved the purchase of a new vactor truck to be used in cleaning catch basins and storm sewers at the August 6 meeting, and we accepted delivery in September. Due to freezing conditions, this unit is typically not used much during the winter months, though some of our backlog was eased this past fall as we prioritized this work.
6. Street Sweeping – DPS has been intensifying our on-street leaf collection activities for the past month, as even those leaves that fall directly into the street from City trees and those that blow around from adjacent property terraces can easily become excessive, beyond our normal maintenance sweeping level. For a period of about four to six weeks (depending on the weather), we run two or three (if all of our older units are operable) sweepers along with two to four dump trucks in a rotating convoy to avoid having to continuously return the sweepers to dump leaves themselves each time the hopper unit is full. We have found this is the most efficient method, but residents should be advised that it does still normally take a full month to make a City-wide cycle, and all work is often not completed until the end of November or early December, depending on weather conditions and final leaf drop. This also unfortunately can tie up nearly half of our available personnel during this time, so our ability to respond to discretionary tasks is very limited. Obviously, removal of as many leaves as possible before the first major snowfall is a high priority to avoid plowing these back into the terrace, which makes for a larger mess in the spring depending on the quantity. At the present time, we are still attempting to complete all remaining streets, but progress is slowed even further by the fact that many of the leaves in the gutters are now quite wet due to recent rainfalls, and in some cases are binding to the pavement due to the temperatures. We will be delivering our composted leaves to Snow’s Nursery, who has agreed to process roughly 1,600 cubic yards for \$6 per cubic yard on our behalf. Leaf collection, like regular street sweeping activities, is charged to the City’s Refuse Fund millage.
7. Leaf Bag Distribution / Yard Waste Collection – the City completed its distribution of 70,000 leaf bags on November 5. Bags were distributed on most Saturdays in October from 8 A.M. to 1 P.M., and on most Mondays and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. at the Department of Public Services facility at 222 Jones Avenue. Bags were limited to 50 per person for City residents only, and staff loaded them directly into vehicles for the citizens, which seemed to be well received again this year. Yard waste collection will continue through the week of December 10. Guidelines for yard waste collection are listed on the City’s Refuse Reference document on the City’s web page. Residents may continue to use the City-supplied yard waste bags, as well as those purchased from area vendors, along with re-usable cans with yard waste stickers, available free at City Hall. Yard waste will resume again the week of April 1, 2019.
8. Enterprise Fleet Management Program – the City Council approved of entering into a contract with Enterprise to lease vehicles to the City in lieu of cash purchases, and said vehicles are then replaced on a five-year cycle to minimize maintenance costs. City staff will continue to perform the maintenance, and staff is finalizing the vehicle specifications for the first 18 vehicles. As a part of the program, we will also be switching to a different fueling program that should afford more widespread fueling options. The first 18 vehicles have been ordered and will be delivered in the next 2-4 months, depending on the units. Significant time is being spent in transitioning to the Enterprise maintenance program, which will better allow for determination of costs and maintenance history. We will also still be responsible for the installation of any after-market items, and a request to purchase four (4) V-plows for new units will be placed on the December 17 City Council agenda for action.

9. Holiday Decorations / Events – DPS staff installed decorations ahead of the downtown tree lighting on November 17. As in previous years, the DDA volunteers were responsible for decorating any poles and locations that can be reached with ladders, and our staff installed the overhead decorations at the three (3) banner locations, the lights on the large tree in front of the courthouse, the light poles on the Monroe Street Bridge, and the lit decorations mounted on various light poles. Removal of the decorations each year is always subject to weather conditions, though they are typically left up through the first week of January. Staff will also be responsible for traffic control, electrical connections, and other logistics related to the downtown Christmas Magic parade on December 15. As might be expected, significant staff time is spent preparing and removing each year’s decorations, and staffing the events on behalf of the City.
10. Election Set-up and Tear-Down – as with all elections, Public Services staff assisted the Clerk-Treasurer’s office with setup on the Monday prior and teardown on the Wednesday following the election November 6. Our crews do work in the evening hours as well on Monday due to some facilities being unable to accommodate setup during the daytime hours as they are in use.
11. Winter Operations Policy – the Department issued our official winter operations policy document on November 28, which is largely identical to last year’s policy. There are two (2) small changes to the City’s Major Street system that affect routing, and these involve the addition of West Lorain Street from Village Green to the west end near Manor School as a major street, and the deletion of East Front Street from Winchester to new Front / Conant as a major street. Neither of these changes should affect many motorists, as most of this section of East Front Street is now closed to traffic. Also, the Clerk-Treasurer’s office advertised the ordinance requiring sidewalk clearance in October as required by the ordinance, so that the City’s legal notification is now met. The Parks and Recreation Department will again handle snow removal activities at the various park facilities, including Munson Park and Mark Worrell Trail in particular for more targeted attention to our facilities that remain most heavily-used during winter and snowy conditions. At present, all 14 Teamster personnel are currently budgeted to remain under the supervision of the Public Services Department during winter operations, with Parks retaining one (1) Teamster assigned to their operations and available for winter activities.
12. Downtown curb line snow removal contract renewal – after two (2) years with a dedicated service contract, in 2017-18 the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) chose not to enter into a contract to remove the continuous row of snow from the top of the curbs in the downtown area that results from both roadway plowing and sidewalk clearance by property owners. As such, DPS staff will be again tasked fully with this work in 2018-19. With these activities generally considered to be a lower priority than street and parking lot clearance City-wide, in larger storm events this activity may be postponed 3-4 days until it can be undertaken.
13. Miscellaneous Winter Projects – as with every winter, the Department keeps a list of potential projects that can either be accomplished inside, or could be addressed appropriately in a year without bitterly cold temperatures and / or excessive snow. Additional low-limbings of trees is always a major priority as it is probably the single most consistent departmental activity where proactivity will yield long-term dividends in the form of fewer emergency call-outs. We typically like to also make headway on sign replacement during the winter, specifically those stop and street name signs necessary to meet Federal retro-reflectivity guidelines and that may not require new channels to be driven into the ground. This year’s focus will be on parking and miscellaneous signs on the south side of the River.

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